

Camp Food

Each of us has our own gastronomic preferences depending on our taste, culture and experience so the topic of food for camping is diverse and subjective, so here I've covered a few of the basic criteria for good camp food and made some suggestions;



The Critical Factors

1. You need energy so it must be concentrated high-calorie food;
2. You have to carry it so it needs to be as light as possible;
3. You have to cook it so it needs to use as little fuel, water and time as possible;

You Need Calories

If you're in a remote location, you've probably expended energy getting there and, for many of us, we're in that location to engage in energetic activities like hillwalking, canoeing, mountaineering, cycling etc. so we need to replenish our used energy with food;

There are three primary sources of energy;

Carbohydrate; easy to digest, short-term comfort food, usually need to be cooked;

Protein; high calories, much harder and slower to digest, essential for recovery;

Fats and oils; very high-calorie values, long-term energy source; difficult to clean pots;

These three food groups will provide almost all the calories you need, and you need a lot:

A 70kg person carrying a 10kg rucksack on a 5 hour hillwalk in the Lake District will burn approximately 3200Cal which needs to be replenished.

For each additional kg (bodyweight and load) add 10 calories per hour and for every extra hour walked, add 9x your bodyweight, in calories, to your total energy expenditure.

To replenish 3200 calories you need to consume:

A sandwich	250
Banana	100
2 50g flapjacks	450
Snickers/ Mars bar	250
100g mixed fruit n nuts	380
2 mugs of hot chocolate (with milk)	200
A large portion of pasta Bolognese	480
5 chocolate digestives	400
50g cheese (emmental/edam)	180
Beans and sausages (breakfast)	360
2 hard boiled eggs	150
Total calories	3200

Each of us will choose our favourite foods to take, but the chart above gives an idea of how much to take. The page below gives a list of foods that are popular with hillwalkers and mountaineers:

Popular High Calorie Foods for Remote Camping

I've not listed any of the highly processed foods or snacks, primarily because they vary so much, taste rubbish and I don't eat them, so I don't have any expertise to offer.

All the following are relatively easy to prepare and pack with cooking reduced to a minimum saving time and fuel.

Pre-cooked meals can be a little heavier but in most cases you'll need to carry less fuel and water. Most of these can be cooked in one pan, for example, heat your pasta sauce, add the pre-cooked pasta put a lid on the pan and then turn the heat off.

Snacks/Lunch

- Nuts/mixed dried fruit and nuts
- Chocolate/chocolate and nut bars
- Flapjack and other oat/cereal bars
- Cured sausage (saucisson/chorizo/salami)
- Pork pies
- Cheese
- Bread/sandwich
- Olives
- Oatcakes (crispy) with pate/cheese/sausage
- Jelly babies
- Biscuits; chocolate digestives, oaties, kitkat, etc

Evening meals

- Pre-cooked pasta and sauce (pesto, beef, tuna or vegetable Bolognese, carbonara)
- Pre-cooked white rice and sauce (curry, chilli with meat or vegetables)
- Pre-cooked egg noodles with sauce (prawn satay, chilli chicken, beef n black bean)
- Instant noodles with pre-cooked added meat and veg (stir fry)
- Smash with beans and sausages

Breakfasts

- Baked beans, pre-cooked sausages, tinned toms, pre-cooked bacon, omelette
- Pre-cooked kedgeree
- Pre-cooked pancakes, with pre-cooked bacon and syrup
- Pre-cooked egggy oatcakes with beans/bacon/toms
- Eggy bread (French toast) and beans/bacon/toms
- Porridge (ew!-glue)

Drinks

- Teabags, sugar and milk (fresh milk if possible in a flask in summer, a bottle in winter).
- Fresh coffee (I carry fresh ground coffee when I can)
- Hot chocolate.